

RACCOURCI

BOUNDARY: This EMU is bordered on the north by the Bully Camp EMU and Grand Bayou (Bayou Pointe-au-Chien EMU), on the west by the Terrebonne-Lafourche parish boundary, and the natural levee of Bayou Pointe-au-Chien (northern half of EMU). On the south, the boundary is the Timbalier EMU - a line running from Belle Pass through Timbalier Bay just north of Casse-Tete Island westward to the Terrebonne-Lafourche border. On the east, the EMU is bordered by Bayou Lafourche (Fourchon EMU), series of oil and gas canals (Leeville EMU) Bayou Lafourche again to the southern part of Golden Meadow, then a series of oil and gas canals and the east boundary of Catfish Lake and another oil and gas canal until an intersection with the South Lafourche levee (Golden Meadow EMU) then north along the South Lafourche levee to the boundary of the Bully Camp EMU

SOILS: Soils range from brackish to saltwater marsh types. Organic layers of varying thicknesses are underlain by gray silty clays or saline and mucky clays. When flooded the organic layers separate from the clays and float.

VEGETATION: Marsh vegetation ranges from brackish and saline marsh. Vegetation types include wire-grass, three-cornered grass and saltgrass in the brackish areas; and oyster grass, blackrush and saltgrass in the saline areas. Scrub woody vegetation grows on some canal spoil banks. Some natural levee vegetation still exists on the raised portions of the old Pointe-au-Chien natural levee in the northwest portion of this EMU. A few patches of Black Mangrove grow on the islands in Timbalier Bay at the extreme southern portion of this EMU.

SUBSIDENCE POTENTIAL IF DRAINED Very high throughout the Management Unit due to the high organic content and wetness of the soils. Subsidence may exceed 51 inches in the brackish water zones.

LAND LOSS POTENTIAL:

A Due to Shoreline Retreat: The average measured rate of shoreline retreat is up to 100 feet per year along the Gulf shoreline of Lafourche Parish.

B Due to Channel Construction: High throughout the study unit.

TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES: The EMU is composed of low lying marsh lands and shallow lakes and bays open to the Gulfs including Bay Courant, Deep Lake and Lake Raccourci. Bayous forming natural drainage flows are numerous, as are pipeline, location and navigation canals. In large Lake Raccourci, oil and gas wells are numerous and there are numerous marsh islands - Philo Brice Islands, Northwest Island, and those in Jacko Camp Bay). Depths in Lake Raccourci are generally 3 to 7 feet with shallower, sand bar or tidal flat areas. The area is part of the Terrebonne Drainage Basin. The study unit is cut by numerous canals, lakes and bayous; including Grand Bayou, Grand Bayou Blue, Bayou Blue, Bayou Faleau, Bayou Monnaie, Bayou Sevin, Catfish Lake, Bay Sevin,

Laurier Bay Laurier Bayou, and Bayou Pierre et Lee. Numerous oil and gas field location canals also cross the unit. Louisiana Highway 1 and spoil deposits along location canals have elevations of 2 to 4 feet MSL. Oil and gas wells are scattered throughout the unit, especially around Catfish Lake (part of the Golden Meadow Oil and Gas Field). Pointe-au-Chien Wildlife Management area extends into the extreme northwestern portion of the unit.

FLOODING POTENTIAL: The entire area is flood prone.

IMPORTANT FARMLANDS: None.

USE OF LAND: Large amounts of mineral extraction occur around Catfish Lake (the Golden Meadow Oil and Gas Field) and in the northern portion the unit around Lake Bully Camp Oil and Gas Field as well as in Lake Raccourci and Timbalier Bay. Most of the unit is semi-natural and altered marshland. Camps are scattered throughout the north and central portions of the study unit. Recreation, hunting, and fishing are other major uses. Trapping lands are found in the northern portion of the study unit. One small Indian community, Fala, survives on the northern shore of Catfish Lake.

UNIQUE ECOLOGICAL FEATURES:

A. Geological Features: None

B. Botanical Features:

1. Black Mangrove Areas: found on Philo Brice Islands and Northeast Island in Lake Raccourci, and on surrounding islands
2. Woodlands and shrubs found on Felicity Island at the end of Bayou Pointe-au-Chien

C. Zoological Features:

1. Seabird colonies and wading bird rookeries
 - a. East of Old Lady Lake - Latitude 29° 14' Longitude 90 24'
 - b. Felicity Latitude 29° 18' Longitude 90° 17'
 - c. NW of Pierle Bay Latitude 29° 10' Longitude 90 114
 - d. West of Pierle Bay Latitude 29° 10' Longitude 90 17'
2. Primary fish and shellfish nursery grounds found throughout the area; part of the Terrebonne Basin (includes croaker, menhaden, brown and white shrimp, blue crab, etc.)
3. Oyster lease grounds found above Lake Raccourci (private leased oyster beds)

RECREATIONAL POTENTIAL: Area is suitable for hunting, trapping, and fishing with access from Golden Meadow, Leeville and numerous bayous

HYDROLOGIC RESOURCES: The water table is at the surface. There is little or no potable fresh water, except for occasional lenses floating upon saltwater.

HISTORIC/CULTURAL/ARCHEOLOGICAL:

A. Historic Sites: None.

B. Cultural Sites: One small Indian community remains on the northern shore of Catfish Lake, a reminder of when such villages were scattered throughout South Louisiana's marsh and swamplands. The settlement, known as fala consists of five families; all of which exist as fishers and trappers.

C. Archeological Sites:

LF 41 Known Shell Midden near Catfish Lake

LF 32 Prehistoric Indian Mound Pointe-au-Chien

LF 39 Known Shell Midden Grand Bayou

LF 40 Known Shell Midden Grand Bayou

LF 41 Known Shell Midden Grand Bayou

LF 43 Known Shell Midden near Laurier Bay

LF 49 Known Shell Midden near Laurier Bay

GOALS

1. Reduce saltwater intrusion into the EMU.
2. Reduce erosion in Area B and C (as indicated on EMU map)
3. Reduce erosion in Area D (as indicated on EMU map)
4. Reduce expansion of canals west and southwest of Catfish Lake

This EMU consists mainly of salt and brackish marshes and large open bays in the southern portion of the area. The only high ground are isolated remnants of the Pointe-au-Chien and South Lafourche levee system and a few spoil banks. Erosion is a problem here although the rates are significantly slower than for Clovelly and South Barataria. The marshes are somewhat less cut up here than in the Barataria Basin EMU's east of Bayou Lafourche.

There are four areas within the EMU where specialized policies should be implemented. These are:

Area A - Oil and gas canal area west and southwest of Catfish Lake including the lake.

Area B - Brackish marsh area in the northwest portion of the unit experiencing significant ponding and saltwater intrusion

Area C - Brackish marsh area in the northeast portion of the EMU experiencing the same stresses as Area B

Area D - Saltmarsh area on the east portion of Raccourci northwest of the Leeville EMU experiencing ponding

GENERAL RACCOURCI POLICIES

POLICY 1. All general policies for the Lafourche Coastal Zone shall apply in this EMU unless modified by specific EMU or sub EMU policies stated in this EMU policy statement.

POLICY 2. No canals should cut through the spoil banks associated with the Columbia Gas/United Gas Twin pipeline canals running east -west through the EMU If a canal or pipeline must break the spoil bank, dams should be constructed as per the general policies or the spoil bank should be restored to its original conditions to help retard saltwater intrusion inland.

POLICY 3. There shall be no illegal dumping in this EMU of any liquid or solid waste. Existing tank storage sites and well sites shall follow all applicable guidelines as specified by the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources regarding the storing and disposal of wastes from mud pits, well construction, etc.

POLICY 4. Permanent human habitation dwellings should be discouraged throughout this EMU due to severe flooding potential from storms. and lack of adequate water and sewerage facilities. Any permits associated with recreational or any other type of permanent dwellings shall require adequate on site sewerage and proof of compliance with solid waste disposal and collection regulations of Lafourche Parish.

POLICY 5. The spoil banks on both sides of the twin pipeline canals (Policy 2) should be maintained as a barrier to saltwater intrusion. Mitigation conditions for dredge and fill permits in the immediate area may require that spoil be deposited along these banks so as to maintain them as viable intrusion barriers.

SUB EMU POLICIES AREA A

Area A is a transition zone between brackish and saline marshes. It is also traversed by the Grand Bayou-Bayou Scully-Bayou Blue drainage system - a major conduit of saline waters along with canals into the Pointe-au-Chien and Bully Camp EMU. There are also numerous oil and gas access canals in this area (Golden Meadow Oil Field) as well as

Catfish Lake. The area immediately to the east (Golden Meadow EMU) has undergone significant deterioration due to oil and gas access canals.

POLICY 6. Existing channels should be used wherever possible to access new oil and gas well sites. If a new channel is to be dug, it should be incumbent upon the permit applicant to demonstrate that no feasible alternative exists to carry out the activity.

POLICY 7. North - south canals connecting the many oil and gas access canals should be discouraged due to their exacerbation of saltwater intrusion problems and erosion.

AREA B

Area B is an area of deteriorating brackish marsh similar to the Clovelly EMU Saltwater intrusion has caused extensive ponding here as well as in the southern portions of the Pointe-au-Chien EMU.

POLICY 8. All canals dredged in this section of the Raccourci EMU should place spoil on the outside bank (the one opposite the ponding areas) to help retard the spread of the water areas.

POLICY 9. Spoil banks along Bayou Bouillon should be maintained as per the method outlined in Policy 5 of this EMU.

POLICY 10. Consideration should be given to additional dams or weirs along Bayou Salle and Bayou Bouillon to retard saltwater intrusion to the north. Financing for these projects could be either through a parish mitigation fund and/or mitigation conditions imposed on permits in the vicinity of these proposed projects.

AREA C

Area C is much like Area B: the only difference is that much more extensive deterioration has occurred in the marshes of Bully Camp EMU to the north.

POLICY 11. All channels running north - south, especially the Tennessee Gas Pipeline and Bayou Blue should have weirs or dams placed across them to slow down the rate of saltwater intrusion into the brackish and freshwater areas to the north. The method for constructing these facilities should be as stated in Policy 10.

POLICY 12. The spoil banks along the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Canal should be maintained as a deterrent to further enlargement of the ponded area in this part of the EMU Maintenance of the spoil bank should be accomplished as per Policy 5 of this EMU.

POLICY 13. Any dredging of the channel that forms the southern boundary of Area C should require that spoil be placed along the northern bank to retard saltwater intrusion.

AREA D

Area D is a deteriorating saltmarsh area in the southeastern part of the EMU. Some of this deterioration appears to be natural but activity in the area has exacerbated the erosion problem.

POLICY 14. Whenever feasible, spoil obtained from maintenance dredging of existing canals should be spread so as to create new marsh sites in the general area of the dredged activity.

POLICY 15. Existing pipeline corridors should be used for any new pipeline construction unless it can be demonstrated that it is absolutely necessary that a new canal be dredged. If a new canal is dug, conditions stated elsewhere for this EMU should apply to spoil deposition from canal construction.

POLICY 16. If new canals are to be dredged in the wetland portion of this EMU, it should be demonstrated that no alternative utilizing existing waterways is possible and/or it is economically not feasible to use techniques such as directional drilling to avoid unnecessary destruction of marshland.

POLICY 17. If new oil and gas access canals are dredged, spoil should be deposited along their outer banks in relation to the pending areas to retard the expansion of the ponds.

POLICY 18. No "through" canals should be dredged without dams through this area north - south or east - west.

Besides these guidelines, all coastal use guidelines as stated in the F.E.I.S. of the Louisiana Coastal Zone Management Program shall apply to this EMU.

These EMU policies refer to a "use of state concern", the policies are intended only as recommendations to the state program managers and are not legally binding on the permit applicant or the state CZM program.